1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill
535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always
831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[273] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are [764] these toys left there for the *hanal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have
526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone', used of the spirits of the dead.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*hetul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives. 342

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

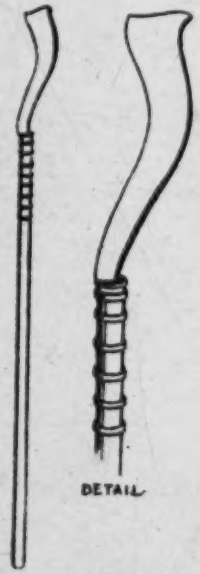

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

241
784
[524]
[513]
[417]
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The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility. [789]

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchalav*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.' [77 775]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. '*Bhaio bihân handiya ma dhyân.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage. 262

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Uspal rice husker *Length* 5'8"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village. 262 252 222 [373]

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik. 262 222 [563]

Aonra fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurin—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sinna, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour. [524] [251]

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 151.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful
[278] remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
262 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
276 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams;
● 524 a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries'
262 when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
262 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An
843 interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 108ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

222 had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save
539 char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honeycomb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

222 The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big
[525] trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitha ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the
[417] tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

[263] The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

[771] Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

● 524 The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty
[171] house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.
Tutri bukāte bātri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.
Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.
A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.
Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.
Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Ann kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

252 The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *ghangvi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[313 493]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *angrāu*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats. 224 [411]

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hāyna mānjhi*). [524]

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught. 223

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it. 224 223 [411]

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such 224 796 787

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawla* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

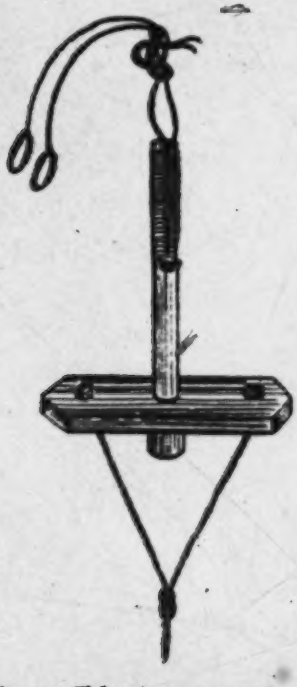

FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524]

A riddle—'He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falcoury:[1]

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223

The Song of Netturgundi

Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Pardhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

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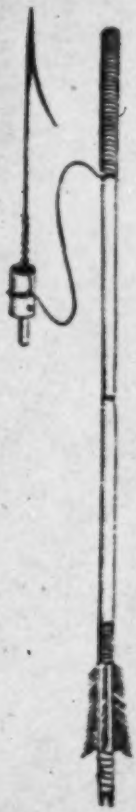
[524]

worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *māndar* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *pelna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundha* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *talai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundha*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *utād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

[539]

FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

Thāpa te thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gōn cho leha manke, bāte nawun chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chodiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Fenland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Fenland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chairs in Fenland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 178 and 1936, p. 179.

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times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Neldnek horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the
137 Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle,
[524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya wāto gorga ale māmāle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately
538 connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

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824 buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the
538 placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always
● [534] gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' -Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

[782] This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharngaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

245 The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka ta jāwa undāna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead.
789 A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of
842 Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and
578 still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel
[586] miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out
843 of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is
843 interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements.
844 The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

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844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

●[524]

Chipta upre jai phar,	There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar?	How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jāwar jiys* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky. [777]

Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kers bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'. [777]

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

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III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

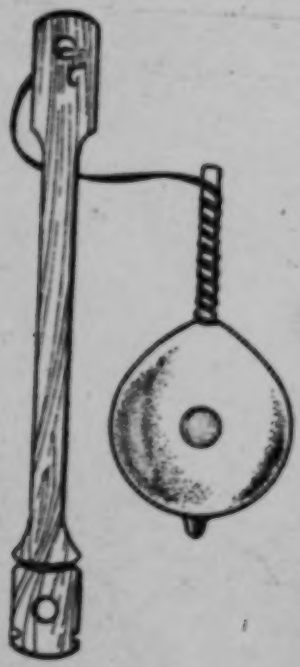

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8½"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

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her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kustpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of class, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

776
[524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (dev) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

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Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

824

In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'. [524]

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles about the stars are common: '*Mesel hadang paselk*: the whetstone is covered with *mung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.' [524]

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *dandai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Turi legends.
[2] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 530 and 530; *The Baiga*, p. 334; Enthoven, op. cit., pp. 38f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 346ff. Penzer has a useful summary in *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 8ff.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste. 883X 291 301

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag. 291 [584]

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.' [524]

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

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301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, 832 but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render 302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or 515 festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just 524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the 302 forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar koto*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

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PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round 332 301

FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area (*See p. 383*)

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the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyāri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows. [524]

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 92) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, [824] of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow [524] with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant *883 put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *sarti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *sarta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dongya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *sarta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon dhumkuria I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga morung which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 33.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

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At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha huha*. The girl shrieked with fright and said 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II THE ANATOMY AND MYTHOLOGY OF SEX

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The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urhul bukha*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*nitigute*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *mâya* and sometimes *pirit* or *perem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda kohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *boude dokalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiydna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

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Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gobivailaisch.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dondi bundle burna.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondâng lewa boteng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prest* or *wunchelee* for the 'affections', *wiya lalatur* for 'beloved', and *mohlta* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

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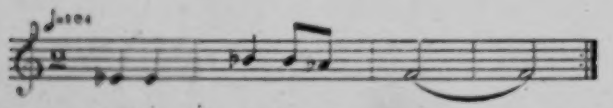

O rere loyo rela rela. Re re loyo re rela. Re re loyo rerela. O rerela rela rela rerela rela rererela rerela rela rerelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

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Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *māwāloti* or *lohāti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[524]

Kaide nehtike biza mend dānta,	Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargāte hileke kos mend dānta.	Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

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throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

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'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.'[1]

IV. Dancing Dress

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Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 430ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GAMES

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I

THE number and variety of Muria games is remarkable. The games (*harsana*) are played in the ghotul, some of them indoors, some out in the compound and usually on ordinary occasions. The word '*harsana*' meaning 'a game' is distinguished from *endanna* 'a dance' rather by its occasion than by its form. Many dances are not called *endanna* because they are not performed either at a marriage, a festival or an expedition. They are casual, go-as-you-please affairs for entertainment, and so, though the form is that of a dance, they are called *harsana* or games.

Some of the games are excellent exercise. They have the same kind of importance that drill has for an army; they teach the ghotul members to move together and to move at once. Others should probably be called little dramas rather than games and they too have their value in developing the wit and imagination of the boys and girls as well as being great fun. There are many domestic games which imitate such tiresome household duties as the husking of rice, the drawing of water, cooking, gathering leaves and fruit. I doubt if these are intended to teach the children anything; what Muria girl needs to be taught to draw water or husk rice? Their educational purpose is rather to make these tasks more attractive and to bridge the gulf between the conflicting claims of home and ghotul. When a thing is turned into a game it is less like work. On the other hand, the marriage games seem to be definitely intended to practise the chelik and motiari in the complicated ritual of a wedding, in which they play so conspicuous a part.

But perhaps the majority of the games are meant only as entertainment and to pass the time. Some of them are certainly adapted to serve the same function as the dances in the ghotul routine. They prepare the boys and girls for tumescence. Others are the natural bubbling over of youth and high spirits.

I have roughly classified the games in this chapter, but it must be remembered that the Muria themselves would never think of such a schematic arrangement.

II. Games of Little Children

I begin first with the games played by very little children.

These are generally noisy, riotous and formless, but often show considerable spontaneity of imagination. The children make little propellers with leaves and allow the wind to spin them round. They make all sorts of dolls with mud and clay and decorate them with their ornaments. At the Hindu Nawa festival, which is generally observed throughout Bastar, the potters make toy grindstones, bullocks, horses, earthen wheels to be attached to little carts, cooking-pots and tiny hearths. After the children have played with these for a few days, those that remain unbroken are sometimes put on the roof of the cattle-shed. The children, however, are not dependent on the potters and like making mud-pies and dolls with earth mixed in their own urine. But generally the small children share the games of their elders, nor is there any taboo or bar on their doing so.

Spinning-tops are used, but not widely and only for amusement. The top illustrated in Fig. 16 was made of a small gourd, through which a bamboo

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peg was driven. It was spun with the help of a carefully fashioned wooden handle, perforated at one end, through which the string was threaded. Boys sometimes fight with their tops against each other.[1]

III. Household Games

I will now give some account of those games which imitate the tasks of every day, rice-husking, drawing water from the well, cooking, cleaning and using dishes, gathering fruit, making a cart, sending grain to market. Such games are mostly played by girls, though there is no bar on boys joining in.

Wanjing or Rumela Karsana (*Plate CXXVIII*)

This game, which is called the Wanjing (husking), Rumela (grinding), Pindi Usna (grinding flour) and Chakki (grindstone) Karsana, is very popular. Girls gather in a compact group. One of them sits on the ground in the middle, holding a long stick in her hand. The others grasp the stick and lift it up and down singing various songs, of which I will give three examples.

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1

Bad bai pindi use rumela rumela?	Which of the girls is husking grain?
Alosa bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Alosa Bai is husking grain.
Wirik wārek kema dāda rumela rumela.	She should not pound carelessly, brother.
Basken usmāl paiwāl dāda rumela rumela.	She never did it before, brother.
Sālo bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Salo Bai is husking grain.

2

Kāy dhān kāy dhān, sulidri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Mot dhān mot dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Coarse rice, coarse rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān sulidri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kalgi dhān kalri dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Mixed rice, mixed rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān sulidri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kuji dhān kuji dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Fine rice, fine rice, Suliari, O the orange!

[1] Tops are common among the Naga tribes, less so in other parts of India. I have recorded their use among the Bhuiya and Juang. The Sema Naga use tops only after the sowing is over, and the Chang fine a man who uses one at any time other than during or just after sowing. The Lhota have the same rule, though they inflict no fines. See Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 104; Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 123; Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 84; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 281.

GAMES

3

Dhān kutat rahew wo dai.	I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis musar māris wo dai.	Holding the rice-husker he beat me.
Luga dharke parayenw wo dai;	I took my cloth and ran away;
Wahi bāt ais wo dai.	He followed me along the road.
Sind buta men lukenw wo dai.	I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayew wo dai:	I went to my elder sister's house:
Bāsi pejla rihais wo dai.	She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dāda ghar gayew wo dai:	I went to my elder brother's house:
Kukri sihār khawais wo dai.	He gave me chicken to eat.

The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:

Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

[1] Ba-ila boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 251.

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Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydei dhara,* pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godei-gara Karsana

This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

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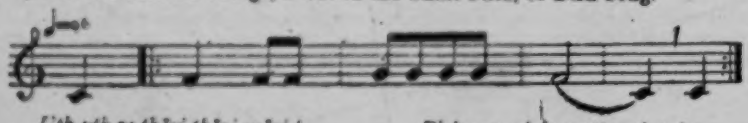
Other Games

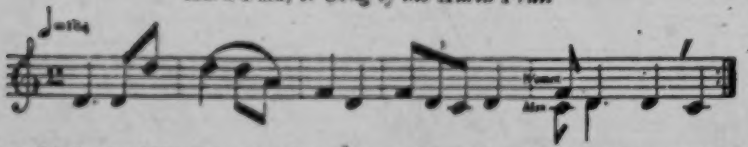
The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.



Uth uth re thāri thāri nāri!	Pick up, pick up the plate!
Pur gula unding.	The hill is burning.
Māta maoli dolinta dolinta.	This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Uth uth re hasela hassia massia.	Pick up, pick up the pot!
Uth uth re sura mura mura.	Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit



Mudur lopādding kuru panding sāngo.	There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Sangen hri datu ale sāngo.	Let us go together, Sango.
Panding tinda dākāt ale sāngo.	We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Rende ākking heit ale re sāngo ui sāngo ri suy.	Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugao represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

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Mango Game

Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai.	The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli ?	Which girl has picked a basketful?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar ?	Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar.	Julpi is carrying the load.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli ?	Which girl carries the basketful?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli.	Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāta [1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling murweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.

Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

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The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

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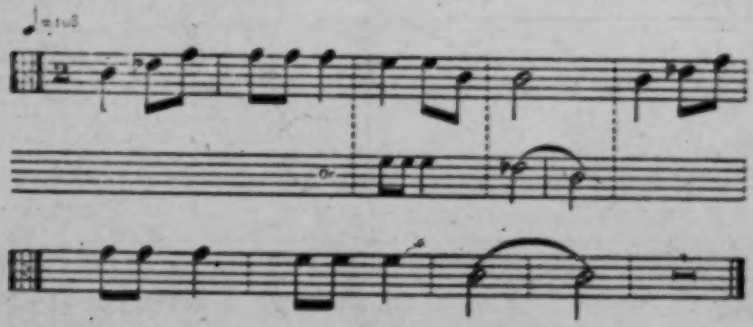

Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanerāt bahin lok?	For whose betrothal shall we go?
Sālobain mahla hanerāt bahin lok.	We will go for Salobai.
Bor dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok?	Who will be her yoke-fellow?
Silledār dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok.	She will be yoked with the Silledar.
Haring paring darange maderāt bahin lok,	We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
Haring harri uderāt bahin lok.	And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

GAMES

Thief Games

In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jāwa*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Hapang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.

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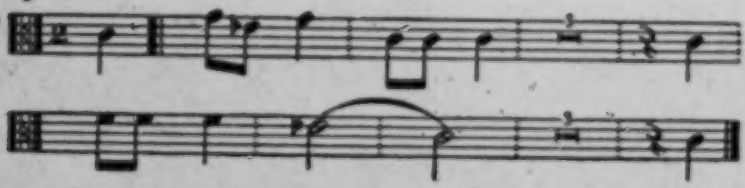

Song

[539]

Lito lito bānga parela;	Bunches of brinjal are ready;
Kāwar hāwar kon torela?	Who picked them load by load?
Kāwar hāwar jolma torela.	Jolma picked a load of them.
Chhai chhai bori kon bechela?	Who sold them six to a *bori*?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.	Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Nakti paisa kon jhokela?	Who took the worthless money?
Nakti paisa jalām jhokela.	Jalam took the worthless money.

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Donga Karsana (Plate CXXV)

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Another type of thief game resembles 'Oranges and Lemons'. In Kuntpadar and Koilibera, it was played this way. Two girls stood with joined hands facing each other. They lowered their hands and a line of boys and girls stepped over them. They raised their hands and the line went underneath. Suddenly the girls caught a boy. The leader of the line asked, 'Why have you caught our man?' The girls replied, 'He has stolen chillies'. 'How many times?' 'Only once.' 'Then let him go.' 'No more, no more.' He was now in prison. The girls made him husk rice by beating his hands; then they shook and beat him 'as if he were in a winnowing-fan'. They pulled his ears—this was the picking of leaves. At last they both hung round his neck to show that he was loaded with rice chaff, chillies and onions, and let him go.

In Sidhawand it was played a little differently. The two girls represented, for some obscure reason, a 'boat'. When they caught a boy, the leader said, 'Why have you caught our friend?' 'He's been stealing rice.' 'How much?' 'Only a little.' Then the girls punished him, pushing him and pulling him about 'as the police do in jail' until the victim cried, 'Come, my queen, eat milk and rice' and they let him go.[1]

Min Karsana

The Muria, like the Munda,[2] have their own version of Blind Man's Buff. Boys and girls form a big circle round a blindfolded boy who has to squat down and hop about trying to catch them. When he catches someone, he feels the legs and tries to guess who it is, while the following dialogue is repeated:

'Blind man, blind man, what fish is this?'
'It is a bod fish.'
'Blind man, blind man, where are its bones?'
'In the river.'
'Blind man, blind man, how many bones?'
'Three cart-loads.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is its oil?'
'In the pot.'
'Blind man, blind man, how much oil?'
'Three pots of oil.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is the flesh?'
'In the basket.'
'Blind man, blind man, whom are you holding?'

If he guesses correctly—and it is surprising how hard they find it to guess right—the blind man is released and whoever he caught must take his place.

Kor Karsana (Plate CXXXIII)

This is the cock-fighting game. The children divide into two parties. The leader of each side secretly chooses one of his girls or boys and covers the

[1] S. C. Roy has given a full account of the Kantara-inu or jack-fruit game played by the Munda and Kharia, which is not unlike the brinjal-stealing and other thief games of the Muria.—S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 492ff. and S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 465. See also *The Baiga*, p. 463.

The Ba-ila have a game to represent thefts from a melon patch.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 253. The Trobriand Islanders imitate the stealing of bananas.—Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 206.

[2] Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 491.

2: Elwin E-[illegible] (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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'cock' with a blanket. Then they bring the 'cocks' forward and make them squat down, facing each other and bending forward as the fighting cocks do. Each 'owner' goes over to the other's cock, pokes it, tickles it, and says, 'Crow, cock, crow!'—at which the cock whistles—to try to see who it is. They each have to guess, whereon the cocks stand up throwing off their blankets. Whoever guesses right wins the game.

The Hawk Games

These Gidal Karsana[1] or Kor Karsana take different forms on a general pattern. I will first give the Berma version.

The hawk gives its adze and chisel to a farmer, who gives them to his hen. In other words the boy playing the hawk gives a bit of wood to the leader of a line of children. The leader is the farmer, the children behind him his chickens. The hen hands the adze and chisel to the next hen and so all down the line. The last hen is very hungry and gives the tools to a goodwife in the village in exchange for a morsel of gruel. After a time the hawk returns and demands its tools from the farmer. He says, 'Ask my hen for them'. She says, 'I gave them to my neighbour'. And so all down the line. The last hen says, 'I was very hungry and I sold the tools for a morsel of gruel'. Back comes the hawk to the farmer and says that since the tools are not to be found it will have to eat the hens instead.

The farmer shakes his head, and says, 'Well, who is greater, you or me?' The hawk says, 'I am the greater, of course'. 'Let us see', says the man, and they measure themselves with arms outstretched, jumping into the air. Then the farmer says, 'Well, eat if you can. But will you eat sitting or standing?' The hawk promises only to eat the hens when they are standing. At once it pounces on a hen. But she as quickly sits down and is safe. Then the hawk runs round and round trying to carry off the hen at the end of the line, but the leader swings the line round to oppose it, and whenever the hawk approaches, the hens have only to squat down to be safe. You would think the hawk would get little to eat, but it is surprising how stupid poultry are! As they run round, the hens sing,

Tin koliya [illegible] gugurgum.	Eat, jackal. Don't fall down, *gugurgum.*
Ada kiko koliya gugurgum.	This is uncle jackal, *gugurgum.*

The song suggests that originally the game was of a jackal, not a hawk, that tried to catch the hens.

I saw the game played slightly differently in Masora. Here a line of children, widely separated, represent pegs in the ground. The chickens run round and round the pegs, chased by the hawk. Once they can catch hold of the pegs they are safe. This is easy for the chickens, and so the hawk generally gets a 'dog' to help him.

In Masora they also play the Hawk Game with mice instead of chickens. There is a long line of mice, first he-mice, then she-mice. Their Raja is Kundalmuma. Along comes the hawk and gives a comb, in other words a small

[1] The Munda have a similar game of 'Fox and Hen'.—Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 495. The Kharia play the Chil-hor-hor, or 'Vultures and Chickens'.—Roy, *The Kharias*, p. 465. So do the Ho.—D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V (1925), p. 199.

2: Elwin E.5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song

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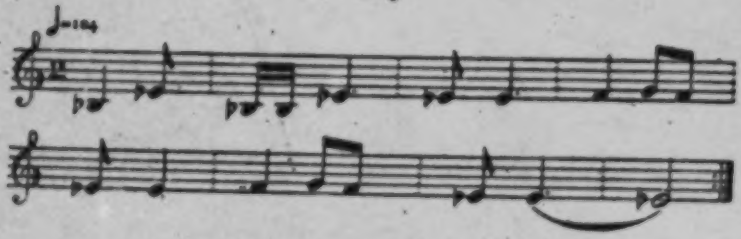

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The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (Plates CXXX and CXXXI)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud huruch*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

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The gardeners now hire two men to carry the roots to the river for washing. There is a lot of discussion about this, but at last two 'coolies' are willing to work for four annas a day. The coolies get a stout pole and put it over their shoulders. Two or three girls and boys catch hold of the pole and are lifted up hanging to it and so carried a little way off, where the coolies bump them on the ground, and then rub them all over with dust and rubbish. This is the washing of the roots. They are bumped to remove any superfluous earth that may be clinging to them. The owners of the field stand by abusing the coolies. 'Why don't you wash that root properly? We'll cut your pay' and so on. When a big girl is carried out they cry, 'There's a fine fat root; we'll eat it tonight for supper'. If a girl is heavily tattooed, they say, 'What are these marks on that root? It's eaten by grubs, it's full of worms. Throw it away'. Of another they say, 'That root's gone rotten, it's stinking, give it to the coolies'. Then the coolies bring the roots back and pile them in a heap, throwing the boy-roots on top of the girl-roots where possible.

Now the roots are to be cooked. The children sit round in a circle, their feet extended to the middle. In the centre the owner and his friend dig with a stick. The wife fans the roots with a leaf. The roots wriggle their feet to represent flames. The grass and earth dug up by the owner is thrown on the heads of the roots. The wife goes round pinching them to see if they are 'done' or not. In some villages half the children lie down with their feet to the centre, and the others catch them under the shoulders and swing them round in a big circle.

At last, some of the roots are sold for chips of wood—the bargaining gives endless opportunities for 'patter'—and the rest are eaten by being hit twice on the back.

Raja Rani Karsana

The motiari sit in two rows facing each other. In front of each row sits a girl representing the Raja and Rani.

The Rani's party sings, 'What will you give her?' The Raja's party replies, 'We will bring pots for her'. But this is not enough. The Rani's party replies, 'But what will you give her?' The Raja's party answers again, 'We will bring ornaments'. And so on interminably, through every present that has ever been given by a Muria to his motiari. But as they are singing, the Raja is shifting nearer and nearer to the Rani, until at last 'he' is near enough and he can jump on her and carry her away.

Another song, in Halbi, sung during this game, was recorded at Gawari. After each line is the refrain *Jāy Rāni* (or *Rāja*) *dhire dhire rego rāni dhire dhire jāwo.*

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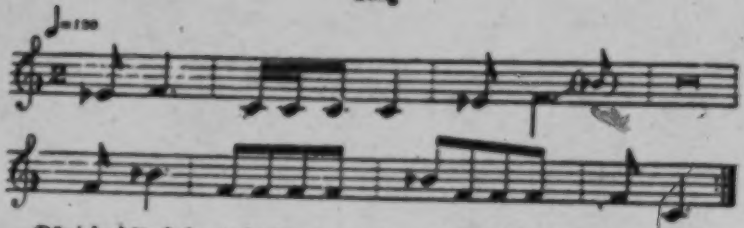
Song



Rānicho bāta bahanta lānten; For the Rani we are bringing an armlet;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rājācho bāta darpanj lānten; For the Raja we are bringing a mirror;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta paijjan lānten; For the Rani we are bringing anklets;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rājācho bāta dhoti lānten; For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta churi lānten; For the Rani we are bringing bangles;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

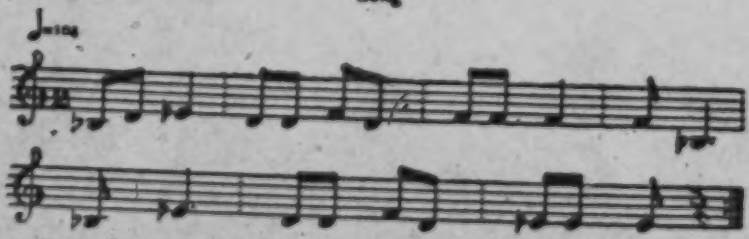
Rājācho bāta topi lānten; For the Raja we are bringing a hat;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta sandra lānten. For the Rani we are bringing a sari;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajana Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song



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Tucho hāje tucho hāje khilwān anāwle mocho belori. For you, for you, I have brought an ear-ring, my love.

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Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho khilwān ke tucho khilwān ke!	Your ear-ring, your ear-ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje māla anāwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a necklace, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho māla ke tucho māla ke!	Your necklace, your necklace!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje mundi anāwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a ring, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!
Tucho mundi ke tucho mundi ke!	Your ring, your ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori!	O the king's anklet!

They continue the song indefinitely, using the names of every possible ornament.

VI. Games of Animals and the Chase

As we have seen, the Muria are good hunters, and like all aboriginals are greatly interested in the behaviour of animals.[1] They have games to imitate various animals and birds, and some of their most dramatic displays are about the chase. In this they resemble, though they do not emulate, the remarkable bird and animal dances of the Juang and Pauri Bhuiya. One of these imitates the strut of a peacock, another the ambling gait of a bear, yet another the unwieldy movements of an elephant. In one exciting Juang variant, girls play the part of vultures devouring a corpse, and again, lying face downwards on the ground, they wriggle like snakes.

Goikal Karsāna (Plate CXL)

This is the Lizard game. A boy gets down on his left leg and right hand and sticks his right leg out behind. Then he moves rapidly forward, first on one hand and then on the other, while he beats his chest with the free hand. The right leg always remains stuck out behind like a tail.

Hupen-korikna Karsana

In this a boy imitates a mouse scratching itself, though he might equally well be almost any other animal. He lies flat on his face supporting himself on his hands and propels himself along by jerky movements of his bottom in an amusing way.

Tadka or Niral Karsana

A small boy wears a mask of white cloth. Two sticks are placed inside to make a mouth which opens and shuts. The effect is bizarre in the extreme. The boy is covered with a blanket and supported on the shoulders of two friends and his feet are carried by a third. They hop round and round with him while he opens and shuts his mouth and jerks his head. Sometimes

[1] When, some years ago, I went with a party of aboriginals to Calcutta I found them more interested in the Zoo than in anything else.

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he charges about on all fours. He is supposed to represent a frog but in some places he is called a panther.

Mogral Karsana (*Plate CXXXII*)

This is the Crocodile game. A boy is held between two others by the waist. A third clutches his legs. They walk forward, and the boy in the middle sways his arms and tries to keep his head and shoulders upright.

Yen Karsana

This is the Elephant game and is played by five boys. Two of them go down on their hands and knees, two climb up and lean forward supporting themselves by their hands on each other's shoulders. A fifth climbs right up on top. Then they go round until they fall over.

Koda Karsana (*Plate CXXXV*)

I have recorded two different forms of this Horse game. The first is played by three boys. Two stand holding sticks at either end in their hands. Two other sticks are laid across their shoulders. A third boy climbs up and sits between them on the upper sticks and supports his legs on the sticks held below. He then drives the two boys forward as though they were a horse.

In the second version two boys get down on their hands and knees, a third stands between them bending slightly forward. A fourth stands on the backs of the kneeling boys and places his hands on the shoulders of the third. So placed they go round and round.

Purar-upihana Karsana (*Plate CXXXIV*)

This imitates the wood-pigeon. Two boys sit opposite each other, putting their feet under the other's buttocks. Each in turn half rises and claps his hands in the air. They swing to and fro, and rise up and down in a very attractive movement.

Hunting Games[1]

The Muria hunting games are exciting and realistic. One type represents the chase after a gaur or sambhar; the other shows the defence of the cowherd against the tiger that attacks his cattle.

I saw an excellent hunt in Sidhawand. A gaur was made by throwing a blanket over two boys. The head was a winnowing-fan doubled over and covered with cloth and real horns were attached to it. A tail of grass and peacock feathers was hung behind. The gaur came on the scene, trotted round, grazed, sat down and went to sleep. Presently a party of hunters appeared. They were nearly naked, smeared all over with ashes, their hair

[1] Mills has an excellent description of hunting games played by the Rengma Nags.—Mills, *The Rengma Naga*, pp. 122f. The Lakher have an Elephant Hunting game.—Parry, op. cit., p. 188. The Kond have a dance that represents a bison hunt; 'one man with the horns and skin of the animal takes to his heels followed by the remainder, who capture him after a brief chase, and bear him back as a trophy'.—Dalton, op. cit., p. 300. Compare also the Lion Hunting game of the Ba-ila.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 237ff. Haddon saw boys at Vailua acting 'very realistically' a pig hunt and a kangaroo drive.—A. C. Haddon, 'Notes on Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 289.

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flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

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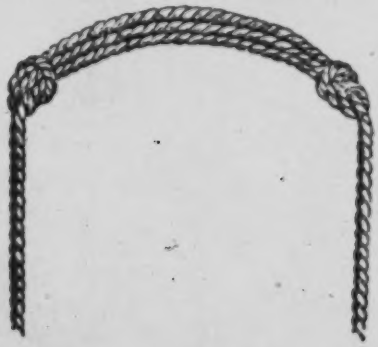

FIG. 143. Sling used in hunting

In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

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creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song

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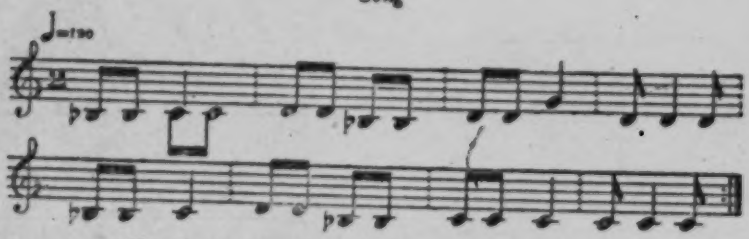

[534]

The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Bermia is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

[1] With these games, compare the Tuyu-merom of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Song

Udiil sängi parbodeläng sängi!	Sit friend, sit friend Parbodela!
Nitiil sängi parbodeläng sängi!	Stand friend, stand friend Parbodela!
Ade sängi niräl sängi parbodeläng sängi!	There is a panther, friend Parbodela!
Witiil sängi parbodeläng sängi!	Let us run away, friend Parbodela!

VII. Games as Exercise

People who work as hard as the Muria should not need further exercise, but many of the ghotul games are in fact admirably designed to test the strength, develop the muscles and train the eye and the intelligence. It is curious that competitive jumping and the tug-of-war, so popular among the Naga, are not found in the ghotul.[1]

Tod-de Pehekana Karsana[2]

A boy sits down on the ground and someone puts a ring behind his back. He has to lean backwards with arms outstretched tilting his head over and back until he can pick up the ring with his mouth. This is a very difficult feat, and generally the boy falls over before he can accomplish it.

Kap-munrs Tehana (Pulling-up) Karsana

The boy lies flat on his face, raises his legs up into the air and grasps them with his hands behind his back so that he is lying supported on his stomach with legs and feet above him. Another boy puts his hands into the loop thus formed and swings him over his back.

Gudha (Rolling-over) Karsana

A boy bends down with his head to the ground, and another boy lies on him. The first boy catches hold of his loin-cloth from below and he catches hold of the first boy's loin-cloth from above. The first boy then hoists him up and throws him over backwards. A glance at Plate CXXXIX will elucidate this necessarily obscure explanation.

Kal-tehana (Legs-up) Karsana

A big boy clasps his wrist with one hand, a small boy stands on his palm holding the other's head with his hands. Then the first boy lifts him off the ground and walks about with him till he is exhausted and has to let him fall.

Kadna (Wrestling) Karsana (Plate CXXXVIII)

In this game a boy climbs up over one boy and under another. Two boys, A and B, stand facing each other, clasping one another's arms. Boy C leans,

[1] Compare Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 120ff.; *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 82f.; Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 102f.; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 109. Among the Trobriand Islanders 'the favourite and most important game is the tug-of-war'.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

[2] The Gondi words mean 'Lifting up with the mouth'.

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head downwards, against the back of A and gets his legs round A's chest. Then he pulls himself into a sitting posture with his legs now round A's waist, climbs up over A's head, descends through the arms of A and B and dives down between B's legs.

A Pulling-up Game (*Plate CXXXVIII*)

Two boys sit facing each other, placing their feet sole to sole. They hold hands or a stick and try to pull each other off the ground.[1]

Gudina Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

Girls sit on their knees in a long line, bending right over with their heads between their knees, and sing in a rather muffled way. The girl at one end heaves herself up and rolls over and over along the line till she reaches the other end. Each girl does this in turn. They sing the following song:

[539]

Dhondera wāndera dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi ātehe tāsna dhondera wāndera,	She will fetch water in an earthen pot,
Tānd te yer tatārde dhondera wāndera,	She will bring roots,
Māting harsi tatārde dhondera wāndera.	She will bring leaves.
Aking hois tatārde dhondera wāndera.	If it is a boy, throw him away.
Pehil ātehe wātna dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi ātehe tāsna dhondera wāndera.	

I would not like to read more into this song than I should. On the face of it, it is very interesting indeed. Many a Muria would rather have a daughter than a son.

Karmata Karsana (*Plate CXXIV*)

Two lines of girls face one another and join hands. The boys pick up a smaller girl and throw her onto the 'bed' thus formed. Sometimes she supports herself by placing her hands on the shoulders of the two leading girls, sometimes she lies prone, sometimes there are two girls, one at either end of the line.[2] When they are ready the girls swing their victim to and fro, singing the while.

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Songs

I

Joyo karmata, joyo roy!	Swing Karmata swing!
Lubur itān mati lubur bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *bawi* fish,
	But it's not a *bawi* fish.

[1] A similar game is known in the Trobriand Islands.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] A similar game has been recorded in British New Guinea, and is there called Bidobido. 'Two rows of boys and girls face each other and opposite couples lock hands in sedan-chair fashion. A small boy projects himself prone upon the lane of hands at one end of the row and is tossed along it to the other end and as he passes each couple they run to the fore-end of the avenue and take up position as before thus making an endless lane.'—R. F. Barton, 'Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 266.

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Sipa itên mati sipa bâra âyo.	We thought it was a *chipa* fish, But it's not a *chipa* fish.
Kotri itên mati kotri bâra âyo.	We thought it was a *kotri* fish, But it's not a *kotri* fish.
Tengri itên mati tengri bâra âyo.	We thought it was a *tengri* fish, But it's not a *tengri* fish.
Madum itên mati mâdum bâra âyo.	We thought it was a *madum* fish, But it's not a *madum* fish.
Joyo karmata joyo roy.	Swing Karmata swing.

2

Kâher mâcha men jhulna ho dai?	In whose *mâcha* is the swing, mother?
Sâjen hi mâcha men jhulna ho dai.	The swing is in Sajen's *mâcha*, mother.
Upar le aise nawa jogi ho dai;	A new beggar has come from above;
Suliyâro la legise nâwa jogi ho dai.	He has taken away the Suliaro.
Suliyâro hanta se much-much ho dai.	Suliaro is laughing *much-much*.
Sâjen dekha se mit-mit ho dai.	Sajen is peeping *mit-mit*, mother.

3

Bor dâdâl uhâr ungiwâl?	Who is swinging in the swing?
Kalamsai dâdâl uhâr ungiwâl.	It is Kalamsai swinging in the swing.
Adu hadu hai uhâr uhâna?	Which girl is pushing the swing?
Manjâro hai uhâr uhâna.	Manjaro is pushing the swing.
Uhma rânî uhma nana ariha.	Don't swing too hard, Rani, or I shall fall.
Arwi râja arwi nana yatha.	You won't fall, Raja, for I am here to catch you.

Mahamandal Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

Boys and girls form themselves into a great *mahamandal* snake. Each grasps with both hands the buttocks of the one in front, and the line moves forward with a peculiar stamping movement. The head does not try to catch the tail; it simply imitates a snake, swinging round and round in a very serpentine manner. At last the line ties itself up by threading through itself again and again till all the children are knotted into a compact and helpless group.[1]

Nun-surial Karsana

This is a variety of the above game which I saw at Palli-Barkot and danced by the Tarbalil children. They wind and unwind themselves in the same way, but in the middle they squat down and walk over one another. At the beginning too the head of the line does not tie them up, but weaves his line through the main line, in and out under the uplifted arms. Here the name of

[1] This is like a Trobriand game, in which 'the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot....It is then unwound.'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

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the game is taken from the Nun-nurial bird, which runs hither and thither in search of grasshoppers and grubs.

Chik-dondi Karsana [1]

This is similar to the preceding game. A long line of as many as forty boys and girls stand with arms extended, catching each other by the hand. Sometimes boys and girls are mixed; more properly the girls are at one end of the line and the boys at the other. Girls sing, '*Silori silori tande masak lo*' and the boys answer '*Kinari kinari tande masak lo*'. To which the girls reply, '*Hat ke geli mund ke geli jolinta joil singri masli non purgi kaon ta kaon ta*'. As they sing, the head of the line swings round and, bending down, burrows under the upraised arms of those next to him; he goes round again to those next but one, and so on, until several circles are rotating at once and the great line is gradually wound up. Then very rapidly they unwind themselves and soon are standing in line again. Now the opposite end begins, and they repeat the process until they are tired.

VIII. Round Games

We may now consider those games in which the children chase each other and run in and out of circles. These too are mainly important as exercise, to train the boys and girls in alertness, lightness of foot and the capacity to seize an opportunity.

Watia Karsana (*Plate CXXIX*)

Boys and girls sit in a big circle. A boy takes a roll of cloth or bit of paddy rope (*watia*) in his hand and runs round and round until he drops it behind someone. That boy or girl must jump up and catch the first boy before he can get round the circle into the safety of the place that has just been vacated.

A variety of this under the same name is played in Tarbaili. Two lines of boys and girls are formed facing each other at some distance. They throw a roll of cloth to one another. Anyone who misses the catch becomes the prisoner of the other side. So they continue until all are gathered on one side.

Giri Giri Karsana [2]

A number of girls sit in a circle. One girl bends down in front of them and several hit her on the back. She jumps up and chases them round the circle. Any she can touch must go and sit inside. They continue till she has caught them all.

Ganda Karsana

Boys and girls sit down in a big circle. They have to get up one by one. The first boy or girl whose knees crack while rising is 'out' and is called the Ganda, or untouchable. Sufficient children sit down to make the circle, and the rest run round and round outside; the Ganda goes into the circle and dashes out to catch as many as he can. Anyone he touches must go into the circle, and when all are caught the game is over. As they run round they sing:

Ek cowrie de re Gānde, nāk me cwain de.
Give me a cowrie, Ganda, and I'll wear it in my nose.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is the stick for applying bird-lime.
[2] When you waggle your finger in someone's palm, it is *giri giri*.

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Pot Karsana

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The Pot Karsana is very similar to the above. Some of the children make a circle; half the others go inside and the other half run round outside. They pull each other in and out of the circle singing *Pot pot pot.*

Pairi Karsana

A number of children sit down in a circle. The space between each child is regarded as a door. Others go round and round in line and have to cross into the middle of the circle by each door in turn. Once the leader of the line has succeeded in jumping over, the rest may follow him. If the sitting children manage to catch the leader by his ankle, as he jumps over, he is caught. It is a 'foul' if more than one tries to jump over at the same time.

A variety of this is called Usta Gundur Karsana.[1] Boys holding hands squat in a circle on the ground. Others run round clapping their hands and singing '*Usta gundur ta tin pe hor wark wark*'. 'Run round and jump. Get some parched rice and eat it.' The aim is to jump into the circle without being touched by the 'wall'. If one boy manages to get in, it means the gate is open, and they all go in and dance inside. Now they have to try to jump out.

Purar Karsana[2] (*Plate CXXIII*)

Girls stand in a ring holding each other's hands. A similar but smaller ring stands inside. The outer ring jumps over the inner ring and gets inside. Then that ring jumps inside again and so they go on over and over each other.

Song

Tuy chithul?	Are you a little [pigeon]?
Ki mai mithul?	Or am I a pretty girl?
Ghāghara ke pāni	The water of a pot
Tabak tor.	Splashes out when it is shaken.

[539]

A *mithul* girl is a smart pretty child who always keeps herself well dolled-up.

I saw almost the same game under the name of Kinaring Karsana at Kuntpadar. A double ring of girls hold hands. The inner ring bend down and the outer ring walk inwards over them. Then that ring bends down and the original inner ring walks over them. They turn and move outwards in the same way. They sing *Kināri kināri dondi maskelo.*

IX. Miscellaneous Games

There are a number of games which do not fall readily into any classification. I give some of them here.

Nana Darbena Karsana (*Plate CXXII*)

Girls stand in a circle facing inwards. They jump up and down, clapping their hands above their heads. Suddenly they turn outwards and go on jumping up and down and clapping their hands.

[1] *Usta gundur* is a small partridge.

[2] *Purar* is a wood-pigeon.

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Song

Nana darbena!
What is your clan, girl?
Whose daughter are you?
I want to laugh with you.
You are of the Naitami clan;
You are a Naitami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Kuhrami clan;
You are a Kuhrami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Poyami clan;
You are a Poyami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
What is your clan, girl?
If I go to a village, I will bring a boy and will laugh with him.
If I go to the field, I will bring a horse and will laugh with it.
If I go to the market, I will bring a girl and laugh with her.
Nana darbena!

Buchi Karsana

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This, which means literally 'the game of the girl with a broken ear', is played by girls standing together in a close circle. They begin to sing a little song with no particular meaning and all bend forward touching their ankles. At each line of the song they raise themselves a little touching first the knees, then the waist, the breast, the shoulders until the hands are held high above the head.

Song

[539]

Dāda gelose gaon gelose buchi buchi!	Brother has gone to his village, *buchi buchi!*
Dāda cho thaili me arrigunda arrigunda;	In his purse is sweet tobacco;
Tindkiney tinwiney arrigunda arrigunda?	Will he eat the sweet tobacco?

The word *buchi*, which means a broken ear, is sometimes used as a girl's name. To tear the ear-aperture (used for ornaments) is regarded by the Muria, as by people elsewhere, as a social disaster, but here the expression seems to have no connexion either with the song or the game.

Mundi Karsana

A ring of girls stand very close together. Every girl with her left hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's right hand until there is an upper ring formed. Then each with her right hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's left hand until a lower ring is formed. They then raise and lower the two rings, singing with a quick jerky rhythm.

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Song

Eh eh mundi !	One one ring!
Duy duy mundi !	Two two rings!
Ohar mundi !	His ring!
Mundi lori !	Rings in a circle!
Pasparela de hodo māli lori de hodo māli lori !	Put the *pasparela* shrubs in a circle!

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Paneng-doking (Frog and Lizard) Karsana

This game is also known as Doke and Nagil-māting (Root-digging). I have also seen it played by Gond and Pardhan in the Central Provinces. Three boys or girls stand back to back on one leg. They link their legs together in order to support themselves and then hop round in a circle clapping their hands and singing various short catches, of which one is *Nagil-mating kutuh kutuh*, or 'We dig for roots and eat them'. And another is

Pehi titung pāneng doking māt titom tetha.	The girls ate lizards and we ate frogs.
Pehor titung pāneng doking māt titom beli.	The boys ate lizards and we ate sweets.

Jatta (Grindstone) Karsana (Plate CXXVII)

Four boys lie down feet to feet like a star. Their feet are tied together with someone's turban. Bigger boys catch them by the arms and raising them up go round and round in a circle.[1]

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Tedapotur Karsana

Boys lie down in a long straight line, each extending his right hand above his head to catch hold of his predecessor's loin-cloth. The boy at the end gets up and walks straddled down the line dragging the boys up with him till all are standing now with their arms between their legs clutching their neighbour's loin-cloths. Then the leader reverses the process and walks back till all are lying on the ground again. *Tedapotur* may mean 'stitching a leaf-basket' and the game may be supposed to represent this.

Song

Mother-in-law 's like a *potor* leaf.
Husband's elder brother 's like the central beam of the house.
Husband's younger brother 's like the verandah pole.
Father-in-law 's like a teak leaf.

[539]

In this song the symbols are probably sexual. The mother-in-law is like the leaf of the *rām-dātun* (or *potor*) tree whose twigs are usually used for cleaning teeth. The two brothers of the husband have virile organs, the elder's like the thick house-beam, the younger's pleasant and penetrating, as the slender pole that supports the verandah. Father-in-law is useless as the leaf of a teak tree.

[1] Haddon recorded a similar game in British New Guinea. Four boys lie at full length forming a cross: a small boy crouches at their feet. Other boys lift them up and go round so that 'the whole contrivance revolves like a four-spoked wheel'.—Haddon, op. cit., p. 290.

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Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

[539]

Song

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawā garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chānwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rāja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo!	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumār kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki hi ri hir.	*Ki hi ri hir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. COCK-FIGHTING

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Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhopa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 283. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

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OTHER RECREATIONS

II. A Test of Wit

The posing of riddles is a fairly popular form of amusement in the ghotul. It sharpens the wits and is often very amusing, the sharp and unexpected contrasts between description and meaning often surprising the listeners into a sudden burst of laughter. Many riddles have both a manifest and latent meaning, the latter usually sexual. Riddles illustrating various sociological points will be found throughout the book, but I will add another 150 here. 522 524

In Gondi, the riddles are usually in what may be called prose. Rhyme is very uncommon and even assonance and punning are rare. The following are hardly typical:

Utu tutu bhui la tutu.
The horn comes out of the ground.
A bamboo shoot.

Uding uding inta, dāy dāy inta.
Say sit sit and say go go.
Sand in which you get stuck.

Porro kāre, adi mond.
Thrashing-floor above, its pole below.
An umbrella.

Konda udinta kāsra witinta.
The bullock sits, the tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

The usual Gondi riddle has no special form.

Undi urpādun nur nei kashintāng.
A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
The rafter of a house.

Tāmur irwura lokku jotāy manta, mati warro warrona lote horiyor.
The brothers live together, but never enter each other's house.
A pair of shoes.

It is in the Halbi riddles, which are now almost as common as those in the original Gondi, that we find rhyme and assonance. The Halbi riddle is spoken very fast with an emphasis on a central word.

Suhlo rukh thai kare;
Burga bhālu hai kare.
The dry tree says *thai;*
The old bear says *hai.*
A gun.

Kurlu dongri mārlu jhāsi;
Ek thuni pachās pāti.
Cut shrubs on the hill of kurlu trees;
There are fifty rafters on one pole.
An umbrella.

Ek garkcho morhigai,
Bāra garkcho pānikhai.
The cow with the broken horn from one house drinks the water of twelve houses.
A fish-hook.

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522 *Chiringia bāja;*
524 *Natrāl pāga.*
It makes a noise like a drum;
It has a red turban.
A sarus crane.

Alliteration is also used.

Phulit phulese,
Jharts jharese.
Flower blossoms
And drops soon.
A bazaar.

Some riddles end with a taunt or challenge, a device which is generally only used when an extra line is needed to complete the rhyme.

Jhil mili tarai
Rai ratan bāri.
Ye dhandha ke nijānbe,
Baile cho nāk ke kāti.

The star sparkles
The fence is beautiful.
If you don't answer this riddle,
Your wife's nose will be cut off.
A mirror.

Karhas pāna rupas dheti
Dhandha ko nahi jānbe ghasnin ke beti.
Rough leaves, silver stem.
If you don't know this riddle,
You're a Ghasnin's daughter.
Sugar-cane.

There's a wall round the lake.
If you can't answer this, you'll be my bond-servant.
A mirror.

The stick is straight,
At the top are bells.
If you don't know what this is,
An ant will bite your bottom.
Male genitalia.

A few rather curious riddles take the form of imaginary conversations. A thorn addresses a man about to step on it. 'I see you, but you don't see me.' A householder speaks to a leaf blown in by the wind. 'Where have you come from, old chap, making your camp on my doorstep?' A flooded river as it rushes on speaks to the reeds growing in its bed, 'You stay where you are; I am going to Ratanpur'.

The riddles posed in the ghotul may not all be of Muria origin, but at least the Muria can enjoy them and see their point. Even if a man cannot make that kind of joke himself, he may claim to have some sense of humour if he enjoys reading Thurber. Many of the descriptions set out in riddle form are really witty and amusing even to the sophisticated Western mind. The riddles too gain their effect from bizarre contrasts. An axe is described as 'a roasted pig jumping from tree to tree'. Anyone who has seen a Muria roasting a pig, holding the headless creature over the fire, will appreciate the

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Plate CXXIV

Karmata Karsana: Swinging-the-Baby, at Tamrugaon

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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522 wit of that; it is even better than the Uraon riddle on the same theme—'A
524 parrot playing on the dry stump of a tree'.[1] Another pig riddle is about a needle and thread which is described as 'a little pig with a cord in its bottom' instead of where the pig's cord ought to be, in its nose.

And what an admirable description of palm wine! 'Outside how quiet—but in the belly how it thunders!' The stomach is always amusing; as with us there is the connotation of something gross and amiable, the fat man keen on his food. A drum is 'a fly buzzing in an elephant's belly'—stressing the contrast of the huge belly and the little fly. A winnowing-fan is the 'man with buttocks in front and stomach behind'—the same kind of absurdity as when a man puts on his trousers back to front.

An oil-press is 'the hunchback bear that pisses all round'. A gun is riddled thus: 'Tap the dry tree and the old bear says *Hai*.' This seems to me amusing in a quiet and bucolic way, but—to make one more comparison with the Uraon riddles—their description of a gun as 'a ghost speaking from a dry piece of wood'[2] is uncanny and chills the heart. It probably has more effect on a European reader: he remembers a thousand guns and the ghosts that they have made.

There is an excellent description of a letter:

A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy:
Where are you off to, pigeon?

Some other witty riddles are these:

The basket broke and out came the tiger.—*A pig excreting.*
Always turns up punctually to work.—*The sun.*
A black cow with a thousand feet jumps onto the Raja's food.—*A fly.*

You can almost see those dirty feet landing in the middle of the plate, scattering the royal food across the table, the face of the indignant Raja.

Two riddles expose the limitations of the human frame: 'You can see the distant hill, but not the one on top of you.' That is your own head. And 'your own back' is the answer to 'You can see all the world save one little plot of land'.

Two smutty jokes: 'The creature has a penis above and a vagina below.' *The backside of a cow.* 'He has his penis in his mouth.' *A sahib smoking a cigar.* These with their vague half-remembered associations to Havelock Ellis are probably more amusing to a European than to a Muria.

522 Really witty smut is not very common; I have been through many Paske Pata, the marriage songs which hurl rhythmic abuse at all the relations of the bridal pair, but I have found nothing that seems funny to me. Yet it obviously seems funny to the Muria, for at each new obscenity they shout with triumphant laughter. Why should it be so amusing to say 'I'll bed your sister', 'I'll copulate with your mother', 'I'll carry off my uncle's daughter'? The reason again is not sexual, but social; it is due to the absorbed attention which all Muria give to family relationships. You can always raise a laugh from a Muria audience by a reference to the Table of Affinity.

As we see elsewhere, certain relations stand in a *hassi ki nāt*, a joking relation, to one another. The time-honoured jokes are brought out again and again and always get a good hand. A man says to his *bhācha*: 'Why not come and live on us? You can't get a living in your own house. Then I'll be able to carry off your daughter, I've always wanted to marry her.' A chelik laughs at his *māma*, mother's brother. 'I'm going to have your daughter', he says.

[1] Archer, op. cit., p. 180. [2] ibid., p. 180.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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OTHER RECREATIONS

III. RIDDLES

1. In the middle of the field they are measuring salt.
Rats.

2. A small boy brings out the salt to be measured.
Rat digging a hole.

3. You stay where you are, swaying to and fro:
I am going to Ratanpur.
A flooded river speaks to reeds growing in its bed.

4. I will say to my brother, 'Don't eat, don't eat'.
Fishing-hook.

5. The wind shakes it *burur burur*: why is it not fit for eating? You are looking at the jungle; why don't you eat it?
Sambhar and bamhar fruit (which sambhar do not eat).

6. Eight legs, nine knees, it decorates the wall, the old dried-up headman.
Spider.

7. The dock-tailed one has twenty-two cubs.
Spider.

8. In the dry tree the flower blossoms: it is beautiful in the world.
Cloth.

9. The belly behind, the back before.
Calves of the legs.

10. Malan bites the buttocks of Salan.
Marking-nut seed and fruit (which sticks on at the end).

11. The *chirota* fruit is not to be plucked;
The spotted bullock is not to be tethered;
The green stick is not to be lifted.
Sun, tiger, snake.

12. The Jamdar hides in the leaves;
The Kamdar hides in the clods,
There is a *ruchhal* sound in the grain-bin.
Hare, field-rat, mouse.

13. It jumps *che che*; it is naked in spite of its clothes; it is the ants' priest; it is the Gunia of the forest.
Frog, spider, snake, usi bird.

14. Inside flesh, outside bones.
Coconut.

15. There's one pot inside another: the son is whiter than the father.
Coconut.

16. The pig is three years old, but it has only a little bit of flesh.
Gongi and shell.

17. The white cock's organ is bent.
Gongi shell.

18. The small boy jumps along, repairing as he goes, the bank of the field.
Needle.

19. It drinks water on the rock and jumps over the tree.
Axe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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20. You are going taking me with you.
A man and his shadow.

21. Who is the priest of the Bastar soil?
The potter.

22. The piebald horse ate a thousand leaves.
A bamboo umbrella.

23. They built a palace without using water.
White-ants.

24. Four-score buffaloes go along a narrow road.
Ants in a line.

25. There is a black man in your house.
Ant.

26. Big eyes, sharp teeth.
Monkey and white-ants.

27. On the ground big teeth; in the sky big eyes.
White-ants and a vulture.

28. It drinks its gruel from a gourd; it hides among the bamboos.
A baby drinking milk and sleeping in a basket.

29. Chitkunj Mitkunj crosses twelve hills, but hides in a dry leaf.
Siari seed.

30. Sit, Bondki, sit. Why are you standing?
The wall of a house.

31. Many kosum flowers in one bunch.
Market.

32. In the field a snake is wriggling.
Cultivators using a rake.

33. On the bush are many yellow birds.
Chilli.

34. The small boy makes the king weep.
Chilli.

35. The smell of the marriage feast is hot.
Chilli.

36. A chip of a dry tree.
Finger-nail.

37. On the green tree is a dry piece of wood.
Finger-nail.

38. Going, coming, but no footprint.
A boat.

39. You can't throw away the seed, but you can throw away the bark.
Boat (from which bits are chipped off when it is made).

40. The deer goes to and fro without feet.
Boat.

41. The fist is full of seed, the house is full of beans.
Children.

42. An old woman digs up the ground.
Pig.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

43. The basket broke and out came the tiger.
A pig excretes.

44. A Lamana woman goes along throwing parched rice on the path
A she-goat excretes.

45. The dish comes from a Raja's house; touch it and you swell.
Fire.

46. On the dry tree blossoms a flower.
Fire.

47. A small boy pulling hard puts on his dhoti.
A man winds rope into a grain-bin.

48. The sacrificed goat drinks water.
Hemp.

49. Lick quickly and fall down.
Broom.

50. Pick up the bundle and it talks.
Broom.

51. Nobody knows the noise of its beating *pat-pat.*
Eyebrow.

52. If anything is thrown in the two tanks, they overflow.
Eyes.

53. Even little fish can't get into this shining tank.
The eye.

54. A new plough, a new yoke, a new field yields a crow.
A new daughter-in-law.

55. It is hard to pick up, but you can throw it away with your left hand.
Ashes from the hearth.

56. A chelik uses up a whole cart-load of toilet-twigs.
The hearth.

57. At the time of yoking—one:
At time of loosing—two.
Toilet-twig used to clean the teeth, which usually splits after use.

58. Five men are ploughing the fields and ten men are collecting the earth with a harrow.
A twig for cleaning the teeth. (Five men means five fingers and ten men means fingers of both the hands.)

59. The hornless bullock grows a horn.
Moon.

60. It always turns up punctually.
Sun.

61. Four are cold, four are hot, four are wet. The deer has twelve toes: each grazes by itself.
The year.

62. The black cock gathers it; the white cock spreads it out to dry.
Night and day.

63. In the stream sits a decorated bird.
Money in a string-bag.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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64. The vulture eats the bullock, but can never finish it.
Sharpening-stone.

65. It is raining dum-dum; the tortoise goes to the bank.
Rain-hat.

66. The spotted monkey eats thirty-two score leaves.
Rain-hat.

67. The thrashing-floor is above, and its peg is below.
An umbrella.

68. This peacock has only one leg.
An umbrella.

69. The baby is born with seven coverings.
A bamboo-shoot.

70. The cowshed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get in.
Breasts that can never be properly covered with cloth.

71. The nose-string is above, the hawk below.
Mango and its stem.

72. Unmarried they beat her:
Married they let her be.
Pot.

73. Inside it goes down deep;
Above it rises high;
It is needed every year.
Thatching grass.

74. The long hen lays its eggs in a circle.
Dāng-hānda, a root.

75. Fruit, fruit, seedless fruit.
Eggs.

76. A cow bears seeds; the seeds bear children.
Hen's eggs.

77. The cow gave birth to a bone, and the bone to a calf.
A hen.

78. Fruit without root.
An egg.

79. The mother gave birth to a seed and the seed gave birth to a child.
An egg.

80. The orange now has flowers.
A chick hatched from an egg.

81. The tree has only two leaves.
Man and his ears.

82. Up stairs, down stairs, a fish in the middle.
The tongue.

83. Dead bullock goes ahead.
Cowhide rope of a plough.

84. A ploughshare falls from the hillside.
A lizard.

85. The white cock goes from house to house.
Curds being hawked from door to door.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Donga Karsana:
Oranges and Lemons, at Koilibera

Plate CXXV

[p. 594(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

524 86. There's white water in the black pot. Queen Thamka is dancing there.
The pot in which curd is churned.

87. It comes when you call and goes back when you threaten it.
Gate.

88. Going it goes, coming it comes.
Door.

89. It takes its food without vegetables.
Wooden spade for digging earth.

90. Three brothers stand on one leg.
Leaf of the pharsa tree.

91. The sweetest thing in the world.
Sleep.

92. A bird goes along dragging a cart-load of grass behind.
A peacock.

93. The white bullock has a black halter.
Kosa-cocoon.

94. You fire the arrow with all your might, but it falls below your feet.
Urine.

95. The mother sits still and her child whirls round.
Earthen pot and gourd used to stir the jāwa-gruel.

96. Two are dry and four are slimy.
The horns and udders of a cow.

97. A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
Rafter of a house.

98. The two brothers live together but never enter each other's house.
Shoes.

99. You can hear the noise of the ring and see its mark on the road.
Cart-wheel.

100. This creeper has only one fruit, but inside that fruit there is a flower.
Lamp.

101. A little sparrow scattered its feathers about the whole house.
Lamp.

102. There is a fire in its mouth; its tail drinks water; we all love it, for it's like a queen.
Lamp.

103. It has a head but no heart. It walks but cannot speak.
A copper coin.

104. The flower is in the water but the fruit is in the tree.
Wild fig.

105. The black seed is sown in the white field.
Ink and paper.

106. A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy. Where are you off to, pigeon? To meet the king.
A letter in the post.

107. The bullock sits down and its tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

108. The tethering cord is long and many calves are tied to it.
Cucumbers on their stalk.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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109. The ram cries when you touch its horn.
Grindstone.

110. The small drum has holes at either end.
Mahua flower.

111. The two brothers clean their teeth with one twig.
Two wheels and one axle.

112. There's no tree near the seed. If you eat it, it disappears.
Hailstone.

113. It cannot understand, but others understand; it is not a man, but it walks day and night.
A watch.

114. It grows in the sun and dies in the shade.
Sweat.

115. It shoots its arrow, but it has neither bow nor hands.
A porcupine.

116. Licks quickly and looks up.
A hoe.

117. It is life without bone, it is black but it's no young buffalo.
A leech.

118. All is burnt but the king's small piece of cloth.
A path.

119. Everything in the forest is burnt but the yogi's sack.
Date-palm grub.

120. The big creature has small eyes, ears like winnowing-fans and no wings.
Elephant.

121. A black cow has a thousand feet; it jumps on to the king's dinner.
A fly.

122. Daughter-in-law's name is Koelapati; mother-in-law's name is Tarro. It goes round the village making a noise.
Government and Kotwar.

123. A little pig has a cord in its bottom.
Needle and thread.

124. Whistle and the pole waves to and fro.
Tail of a dog.

125. The big forest has a little forest at one end.
A dog and its tail.

126. The vagina is underneath, the penis is above.
Tail of a cow.

127. In front, it cuts with a sickle.
In the middle, it fills a basket.
Behind, it sweeps with a broom.
A cow.

128. A little girl ties a lot of cloth round her waist.
Spinner's bobbin.

129. This house has no doors.
Koan-cocoon.

130. If you give, I will give.
Johar greeting.

OTHER RECREATIONS

131. The plough has ten servants; each bullock has five. They catch the mangoes. They shut the little door; they fill the house with water. 524
Love-making and intercourse. The ten and five are the fingers.

132. Two sisters live together with one husband.
Tongs.

133. From the tree-top falls a green leaf.
A parrot comes down to feed.

134. The goad with a little mouth. Who knows what it is?
The person who is bitten knows.

135. Catch it firmly, throw it away.
Nasal discharge.

136. The pillar of the Raja's house sounds *has mas*
The Raja shakes it and it trembles *dal dal.*
Plantain.

137. The fruit of the jungle climbs to the sky.
Whirlwind.

138. A crooked footprint on a broad leaf.
The navel.

139. Throw it down, but it won't break.
Kosa-cocoon.

140. On a burnt tree the vultures sit.
People round liquor.

141. The Manjhi who fells you to the ground.
Landa rice-beer.

142. The roasted hen jumps alive out of its own bottom.
Burnt grass springing up again.

143. The fencing is decorated, the water of the tank sparkles. If you don't know the answer, you will be a girl's *kabāri* (bond-servant).
A mirror.

144. The earth is sticky: the lid is the broken half of a pot.
Tortoise.

145. Bastar's Raja and Kanker's Rani have the same face.
Mandia and sarson seed.

146. When he eats, his thighs are swollen.
A man puffs out his cheeks as he plays the mohori-trumpet.

147. The Mohammedan's horse is full of holes; however many mount it, it never wearies.
A country cot.

148. The leather is cut into threads. The thread is tied to seven drums. Some is tied in a knot, some is tied to a cot, the rest is put out to dry, and the kite without claws comes and kicks it down.
A spider's web spoilt by the wind.

149. The pole stands up without support.
Hair.

150. There's a bunch of corn on the withered tree.
A scorpion.

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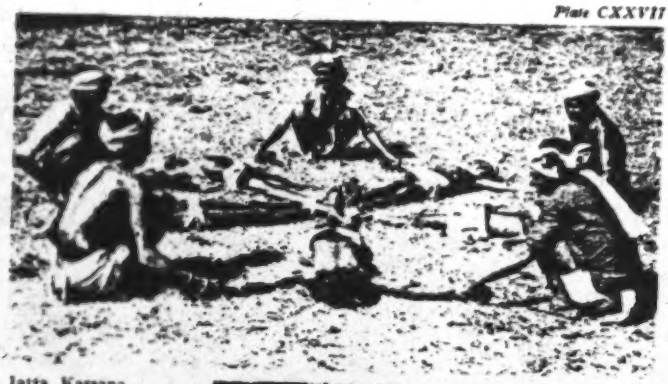
Plate CXXVII



Jatta Karsana
at Metawand

Mao Karsana:
Hunt-the-Buffalo,
at Markabera

Gudina Karsana:
Rolling-over game,
at Koilibera

[p. 606(A)]

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Plate CXXVIII

Wanjing Karsana : Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon

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Rice-huskong in fact

[p.606 (B)]

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Tedapotur Karsana
at Sidhawand

Plate CXXIX

Munjmeta chelik playing
the Watia Karsana

[p-608(a)]

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Plate CXXX The Root Game

Planting the roots

Pulling up a root

[p. 608(B)]

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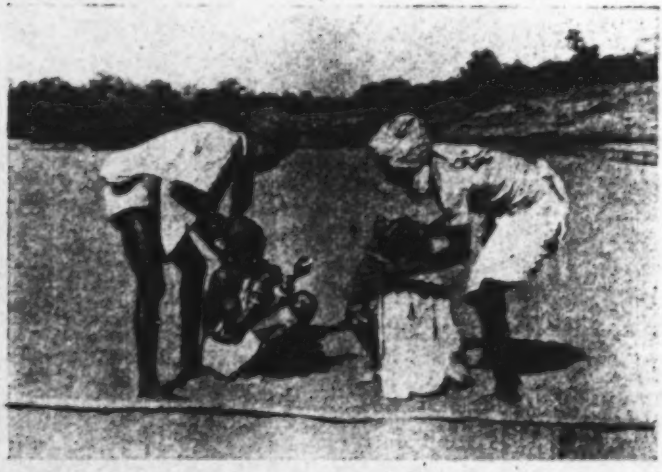
Plate CXXXI

Carrying the roots to be washed in the river

Washing the roots



[1.608(c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CXXXII

The Mogral Karsana, or Crocodile game

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Wrestling at Kollibera

[p. 608(a)]

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1

Kor Karsana

1. Revealing a cock
2. Guessing the cock

2

[p. 610 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CXXXIV

The Purad-upihana Karsana which imitates the movements of the wood-pigeon

[p. 610 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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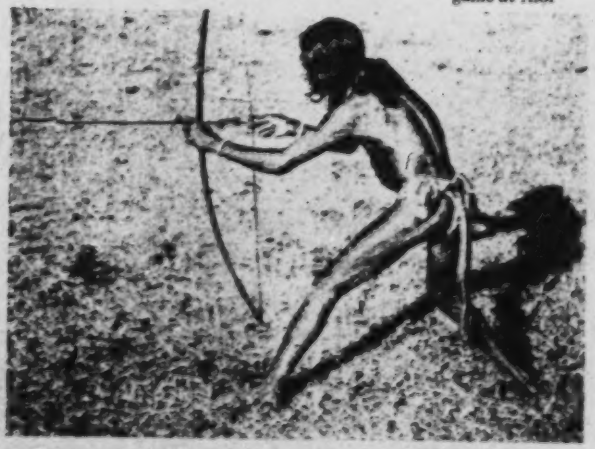
Plate CXXXV

The Koda Karsana, or Horse game

An archer in a hunting game at Alor



[p. 622 (A)]

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Plate CXXXVI

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Shooting the bison
at Sidhawand

Bison-hunting at Alor

[p. 622 (B)]

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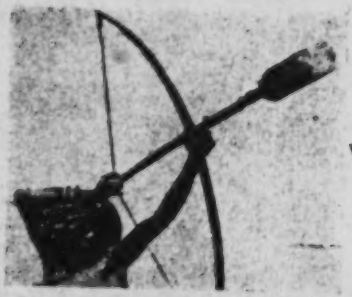
Hunting games

Plate CXXXVII

Preparing a human tiger at Pupgaon



Village jester shoots with a spade

A hunt at Phauda

[p.624(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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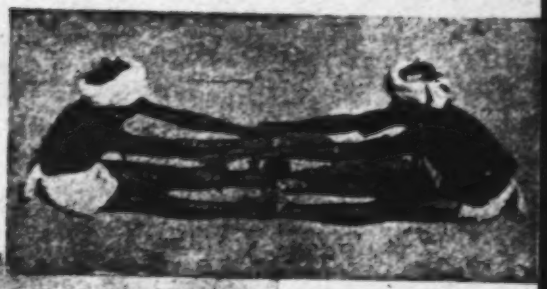
Plate CXXXVIII



Movements in a 'Pulling-up' game

Kadna Kawana or Wrestling game

[p.624(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Baipar-lad Karsana: bullock laden with sacks

Plate CXXXIX

Gudha Karsana

Mahassandal Karsana or Snake game

[p. 624 (c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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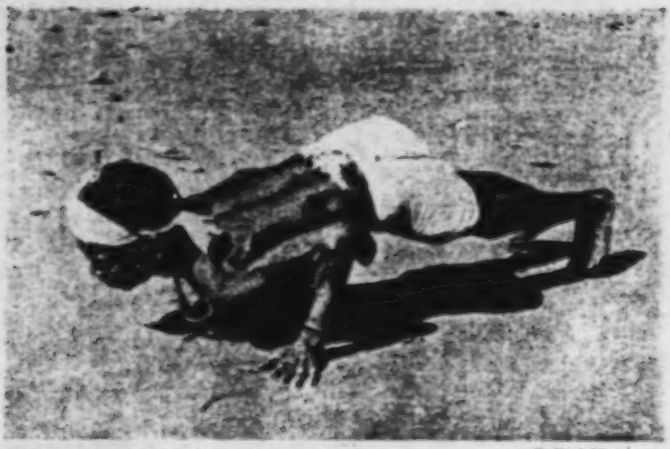
Plate CXL



Goibal Karsana,
or Lizard game

A cock-fighting game

[p. 624 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CXLVI

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The Jhelo of Pupgaon with earthen dolls and cattle

[p. 646 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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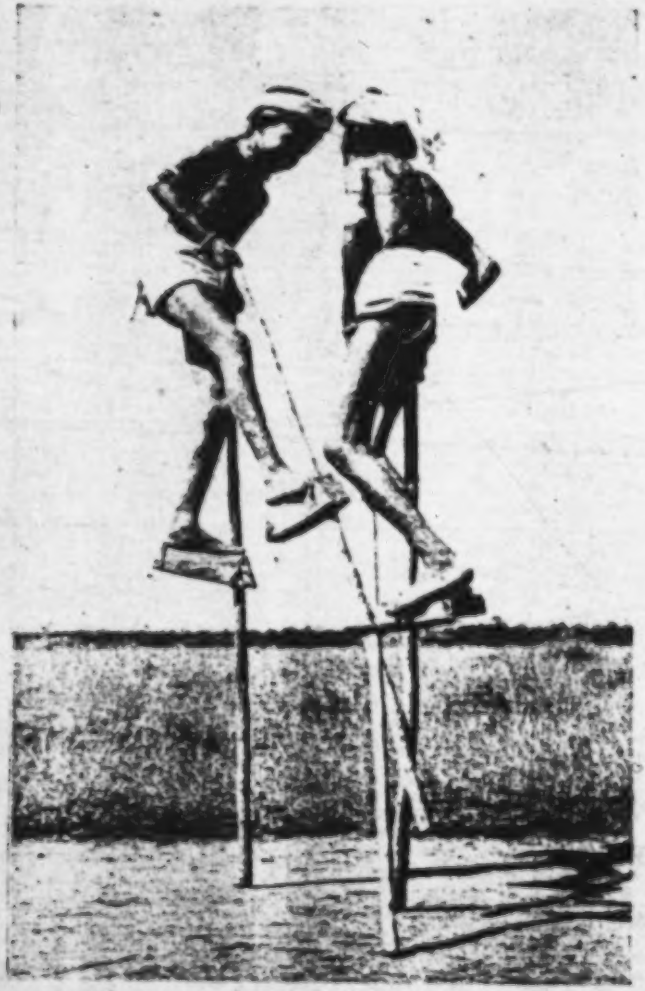
Plate CXLVIII



Stilt-fighting

[p.650 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

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The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6′ high, to which foot-rests are attached 2′ from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground. [524]

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lāya dāya loo loon thi,
Rai hoda hoda the
Nānu daha dharthe,
Gandri bursundi pāru pāru.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting [539]

[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. (See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1896), p. 65. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspur District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 293.

[3] The Angami Naga, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 140.